

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 2003-262-C - ORDER NO. 2003-749

JANUARY 23, 2004

|  |   |                    |
|--|---|--------------------|
| IN RE: Jackson, SC to Augusta, GA – Request to | ) | ORDER GRANTING     |
| Expand Local Calling Scope                     | ) | EXPANSION OF LOCAL |
|  | ) | CALLING SCOPE      |

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the “Commission”) on the request of various residents and public officials (“Request”) in the Jackson, South Carolina area for expanded local calling to Augusta, Georgia. The Request proposes to establish a non-optional calling plan for all Jackson, South Carolina subscribers which would allow these customers to place calls to certain prefixes in the Augusta, Georgia area without incurring long distance charges.

To proceed with the Request, the Commission’s Executive Director contacted the State Director of Regulatory and Governmental Affairs of Verizon Communications (“Verizon”)(the telecommunications services provider for the affected area) requesting information as to the calling volume and the potential revenue impact that would be experienced if the Commission granted the Request for an expansion of local calling scope. By letter dated August 22, 2003, Verizon notified the Commission that it had completed the financial assessment as requested and that the expansion of the local calling scope would necessitate a flat rate charge of \$1.82 per month to be added to the Jackson subscribers’ monthly charges. Verizon also provided the Commission with the number of customers that would be affected by the proposed expansion and the BellSouth

Telecommunications, Inc.'s ("BellSouth's") prefixes (the prefixes are located in BellSouth's service territory in Augusta, Georgia) that Verizon's customers in Jackson, South Carolina would be able to call without long distance charges be assessed.

From the information Verizon provided, the Commission issued a notice to all Jackson exchange subscribers informing them of the proposed establishment of a non-optional calling plan which would allow them to place calls to certain prefixes in Augusta, Georgia<sup>1</sup> without incurring long distance charges. Additionally, the Jackson customers were informed in the notice of the added monthly charge of \$1.82 per line should the expanded local calling plan be approved.

In order to determine subscribers' interest in the proposed calling plan, postage-paid ballots provided by Verizon were enclosed with the Commission's notices and sent to all Jackson subscribers. The Jackson subscribers were instructed to vote "yes" or "no" to the proposed plan and to return the ballot to the Commission. The record reflects that the balloting process resulted in 493 ballots being returned with 412 ballots (or 83.57%) supporting the calling plan, 43 ballots (or 8.72%) opposing the proposed plan, and 38 void<sup>2</sup> ballots (or 1.77%).

Based on the overwhelmingly positive response of the customers as evidenced by the results of the balloting process, we approve the Request to expand the local calling scope for the Jackson, South Carolina Exchange to include one-way calling to certain

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<sup>1</sup> Currently the prefixes in Augusta, Georgia which the Jackson subscribers would be able to call under the proposed expanded local area calling are as follows: 210, 228, 303, 305, 432, 446, 447, 469, 481, 560, 650, 651, 667, 721, 722, 723, 724, 729, 731, 733, 736, 737, 738, 739, 771, 772, 774, 790, 792, 793, 796, 798, 821, 823, 826, 828, 848, 849, 854, 855, 860, 863, 868, and 869.

<sup>2</sup> Void ballots included ballots with no vote being recorded on the ballot and ballots being returned after the deadline.

prefixes in the Augusta, Georgia area (the prefixes are set forth in footnote 1 of this Order). Further, and based upon the cost information provided by Verizon, we approve a monthly adder of \$1.82 per line be added to the bills of the Jackson subscribers to offset the additional costs which Verizon will incur to provide the expanded local calling area to include the Augusta, Georgia prefixes.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
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Mignon L. Clyburn, Chairman

ATTEST:

  
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Bruce F. Duke, Executive Director

(SEAL)